UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

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INTERIOR SCHEDULES PUBLIC HEARINGS ON WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN FLORIDA, MICHIGAN, NEW MEXICO, OREGON AND WASHINGTON

Public hearings on wilderness studies totaling 39,000 acres in Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington were announced today by the Department of the Interior. They cover 11 areas in the National Wildlife refuges administered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

The hearings will help determine if the acreage should remain roadless and suitable for preservation in a primitive state.

Largest of the study areas is 37,735 acres of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico, 100 miles south of Albuquerque. The other 10 areas are small coastal islands.

The Bosque del Apache hearing, covering Chupadera, Indian Well, and Little San Pascual study areas, is scheduled for 9 a.m. March 29 in the National Guard Armory, Socorro, N.M. Detailed information is available from the Refuge Manager, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 278, San Antonio, N.M. 87832, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, N.M. 87103.

Three island areas totaling 418 acres on Florida's west coast will be considered at 9 a.m. April 7 in the Don Ce-Sar office building, St. Petersburg Beach. They include 378 acres of Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge, about 100 miles north of St. Petersburg; 20 acres in the Island Bay Refuge, 90 miles south of St. Petersburg; and 20 acres in Passage Key Refuge, 20 miles south of St. Petersburg.

Brochures on these areas can be obtained from the Refuge Manager, Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, Route 1, Box 153, Homosassa, Fla. 32646, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 809 Peachtree-Seventh Building, Atlanta, Ga. 30323.

Florida's Pelican Island, the first National Wildlife Refuge which began as a 3-acre rookery for colonial birds in 1903 and has since been enlarged, also is believed to have wilderness values. The island on Florida's east coast, 130 miles north of Miami, has a 616-acre unit which is being considered

for wilderness status. A public hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. April 5 at the New Community Building in Vero Beach.

Information is available from the Refuge Manager, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Box 956, Titusville, Fla. 32780, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Atlanta, Ga.

A public hearing on wilderness status for 12 acres of rocky islands in Lakes Michigan and Huron will be held at 9 a.m. March 29 at the County Fairgrounds, Petoskey, Mich. The islands are part of Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Two of them are in Lake Michigan north of Charlesvoix and the third is just southeast of Alpena, in Lake Huron. Information about these is available from the Refuge Manager, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Rural Route #1, Saginaw, Mich., or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, 1006 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55408.

A completed study of several small islands off the Oregon coast will be the subject of a public hearing at 9 a.m. April 4 at the Extension Service Auditorium in Eugene, Ore. The study area includes the 21-acre Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge off southern Oregon and the 17-acre Three Arch Rocks National Wildlife Refuge to the north. Information is available from the Refuge Manager, National Wildlife Refuge, Route 2, Box 208, Corvallis 97330, or the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, P.O. Box 3737, Portland, Ore. 97208.

Several small islands off north Washington have also been studied for wilderness status. Public hearings regarding them are scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. March 28 at the VFW Hall in Aberdeen, Wash. They are the Copalis National Wildlife Refuge, five acres, Flattery Rocks National Wildlife Refuge, 125 acres, and Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuge, 117 acres. Additional information on these is available from the Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, P.O. Box 3737, Portland, Ore. 97208.

Individuals or organizations may express their views on these wilderness proposals orally or in writing. Written comments for the official record may be sent to the Regional Directors concerned before the hearing dates.